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J. Brogden
1766.



Mr. *Brogden's*
S E R M O N

Preached before the

Ancient and Honourable SOCIETY

O F

Free and Accepted Masons.





FREEDOM and LOVE.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE

Ancient and Honourable SOCIETY

OF

FREE and ACCEPTED M A S O N S,

In the Parish Church of St. *Anne*, in the City of

A N N A P O L I S,

On Wednesday the 27th of *December*, 1749.

By the Rev. Mr. WILLIAM BROGDEN, *Æ*
Rector of *Allhalloes* Parish.

Published at the Request of the SOCIETY.

Quis neget omnes leves, omnes cupidos, omnes denique improbos Servos esse? — Intuentem te, admirantem, Clamores tollentem cum video, Servum te Ineptiarum omnium judico. Cic. Parad.

Naturâ propensi sumus ad homines diligendos. Id. de Leg.

— Occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt, et amant mutuo, penè antequam noverint, — ac se promiscuè appellant Fratres — MINUT. FELIX.

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In the LODGE, held at the Indian King, in
ANNAPOLIS in Maryland, on Thursday
the 28th of December, 1749.

AGREED,



THAT the Thanks of the Ancient and Honourable SOCIETY be given to our Brother, the Reverend Mr. *William Brogden*, for his Sermon preached Yesterday, before the said SOCIETY; and that he be requested to give a Copy of the same for the Press.

J. GREEN, Secr.

Am: To the Right Worshipful *Drake*

Alexander Hamilton, M.D.

~~Samuel~~ MASTER; ~~Bird's~~

Mr. SAMUEL MIDDLETON,

AND

Mr. JOHN LOMAS,

San WARDENS;

And OTHERS the Worshipful

BROTHERS and FELLOWS

OF THE

Ancient and Honourable SOCIETY

OF

Free and Accepted MASONS,

IN

A N N A P O L I S;

This SERMON,

Preached and Published at their Request, is

DEDICATED,

By

Their faithful Brother, and

Most affectionate humble Servant,

WILLIAM BROGDEN.



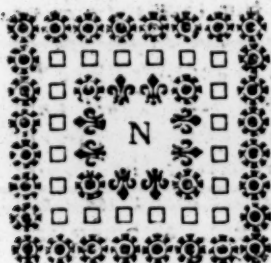
He: Baker



~~David~~ ~~Baker~~

GALAT. V. 13.

For Brethren, ye have been called unto Liberty; only use not Liberty for an Occasion to the Flesh, but by Love serve one another.



EXT to the Desire of *Happiness*, the Appetite of *Liberty* seems to be the predominant Affection of the human Mind. And though the true Idea of *Liberty*, besting a rational Creature, is sometimes obscur'd by the Adulations of carnal Objects, in a *libertine* State; yet the Appetite is itself invariable, notwithstanding all such Mistakes about it's proper Object.

A PRINCIPLE so well establish'd offers a fair Handle to these, who would rescue the Doctrine of *Liberty* from the corrupt Glosses it is veil'd by, in a sensual Life: And I do not see wherein those bright Capacities, which are fitted for doing much Good in the World, could deserve better of Mankind, or do more Honour to God and Religion, than by placing this Doctrine in a clear Light.—I wish'd the present Opportunity had fallen to the Lot of some of these, rather than to mine: However, there is now no other Choice but to comply with the Occasion which has brought me hither, by describing the Doctrine of *Liberty*, or *Freedom*, if not to the Satisfaction or Convincement of the Curious, whom the Novelty of the Occasion (I imagine) may have engaged to accompany us here this Day; yet, with Faithfulness and Candour.—In this View, I consider the present Assembly under a twofold Character; namely, the Whole as an Assembly of *Christians*; Part, as a Society of *Friends*, united together by a Band of Love, for mutual Assistance, and Improvement likewise in all useful Knowledge. Accordingly, what I have to offer upon this Subject of *Liberty* will be either more *general*, as respecting all now present as *Men* and *Christians*; and this shall be my principal Aim because it is the Concern of all: Or more *particular*, as being applicable to you, *my Brethren*, who are distinguished as *Free*, not only in Appellation, but by the Essence also of your Institution; for Reasons I am not to mention here, but obvious to you.

FOR an Entrance upon this Undertaking, it will be expedient to attend a little to the main Design of our Text.—The general Scope of this Epistle to the *Galatians*, is to assert the Doctrine of *Justification*, not by Works of the *Law*, but by *Faith* in *Jesus Christ*: Hence the Apostle insists upon our firmly abiding by the *Liberty*, to which we are called under the Gospel; and charges us not to suffer ourselves to be again intangled in that *Yoke of Bondage*, a *Covenant of Works*; in the Room of which *Christ* has substituted a new *Covenant of Grace*, the Condition whereof is *Faith*, operating by willing Obedience; nor in that other *Yoke*, the *Ceremonial Law*; whose Use and Obligation were abolished, by the Appearance and Suffering of *Christ*, who was typified or shadowed by that *Law*.

BUT, as it is usual for corrupt Nature to run from one Extream to another; and Men, while they attend to the *Freedom* proclaimed by the Gospel from the *Ceremonial Yoke*, which was the *Bondage* of the *Jews*; and from the *Slavery* of *Sin*, which was that of the *Gentiles*; are forward to extend their Privilege to a *Freedom* from all Restraints imposed by Religion, even by the Religion of *Nature*, as well as that of *Jesus*: He further insists upon the abandoning *Sin*, which he expresses by *Works of the Flesh*; and practising Holiness and Benevolence, called Works or *Fruits of the Spirit*, as the Essence of our *Liberty*, as *Christians*.

THIS whole Argumentation is comprehensively abridged in the Text; *Ye have been called unto Liberty; only use not Liberty for an Occasion to the Flesh, but by Love serve one another*: Which the same Apostle expresses thus in another Place*; *being made free from Sin, and become Servants to God, ye have your Fruit unto Holiness*: Parallel to which is that of *St. Peter*†; *as free, and not using your Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness; but as the Servants of God*: Whereof the *Fruits* will be a Compliance with the subsequent Precepts‡; *Honour all Men; love the Brotherhood; fear God; honour the King*: Which I mention here, as being the avow'd Profession, and, I hope, will be likewise the Practice, of all the *Brethren*,

FROM this brief Explication of the Design of the Text, I proceed to the Subject Matter of it; wherein three Enquiries will naturally offer.

I. THE Nature of that *Freedom* which attends the *Christian Religion*.

II. WHEREIN the proper Exercise of that *Freedom* consists.

III. THE genuine Signs and Effects thereof.

I. I AM to enquire into the Nature of the *Freedom*, which attends the *Christian Religion*.—And, in order to this, it will be proper to consider *Man*, either as in a *State of Nature*; or under the old *Law*, and *Mosaic Dispensation*; seeing a great Part of the Gospel *Liberty* stands in his being elevated far above the one, and delivered from the *Bondage* of the other.

* *Rom. vi, 18.* † *1 Pet. ii, 16.* ‡ *1 Pet. ii, 17.*

By Nature, every Man is a *Slave* in a spiritual Sense, propell'd by the Tyranny of disorderly Appetites, and rebellious Dispositions; and so in Bondage to Guilt, Wrath, and eternal Death. Not to speak of the many Declarations of Scripture, which represents Man's natural *Imaginations* as *evil* continually; a little Attention to what passes within, will soon convince a *Carnalist* of the Truth of this; especially when he perceives in his Mind any such Movements as prompt him to disbelieve a *God*, and to disregard his *Word* as *Foolishness*; or urge him to account it vain and unnecessary to obey, serve, or trust in him: Besides the Multitude of enormous *Imaginations*, depressing and injurious, with Respect to *Fellows by Nature*; and too partial, too flattering and assuming, in Regard to *Self*: All of them repugnant to the Rules of *Piety*, *Charity*, and *Sobriety*; which are the Sum, or Abridgement of *Christian Obligation*.

THE Light of Nature, it is true, discovers a *God*: For, fetching Arguments from the Original of Things, which must have some determinate Point of Time for the Commencement of their Being: From the apparent Manifestations of a Providence, in maintaining all the Orders of created Beings; and in continuing their specific Distinctions intire, notwithstanding the Oppositions and Enmities, if I may so call them, subsisting among many of their Kinds: From the wonderful Powers of intellectual Substances, which every Man feels in himself: And, from the Catenation of mundane Beings; which, as Links in a Chain, have Dependence upon one another: All are Arguments, that appear to an unbiass'd Reason, no less than Demonstration of the Existence of one supreme omnipotent Being, the Cause of that Existence of the Creature, and the Object of its Dependence. And the same Principle, if not utterly corrupted, argues with like Strength for Man's expressing his Sense of that Dependence, by some Kind of *Worship* and *Adoration* of his almighty *Maker* and *Preserver*; whether out of *Love* for his *Goodness*, or out of *Fear* of a Discontinuance of his *Regard*. Hence it seems scarcely credible that there can be an *Atheist* in *Judgment* or *Persuasion*: Yet, I deny not that there are many *Atheists*, if palpable Disobedience, or the framing such Ideas of *God* as are not compatible to an almighty, just, holy, and beneficent Being, may be supposed to make up that Character.

BUT this is a plain Instance of the Bondage of the natural State, that altho' Men shall acknowledge the Existence of a *God*, and even not disown their Dependence upon him; they can't persuade their Hearts to render unto him that Adoration and Reverence, which are unquestionably due to so tremendous a Majesty.

RIGHT Reason, I own, is the Foundation of *Liberty*: But that is not to be found amongst Men, without some Mixture of Corruption. *God*, whose Will is Rectitude itself, always acts *freely*, and always *rightly*: But Appetite in *Man* often sways to Evil, even while his Reason persuades the contrary. Degenerate Nature is prone to Vice, because allied to bodily Pleasure; and if Man had only an *animal Soul* like that of Brutes, it were fit that he should pursue those Pleasures without Restraint, as being capable of no other: But if it is true that he has also a *rational Soul*, a Principle within, fitted to take greatest Delight in intellectual Objects and Offices, corporeal Objects can have no Share in composing a suitable Happiness for him; and consequently, he can never be said to act with

Freedom,

Freedom, be the Motions of his Will never so placid for the Time, so long as the noblest Part of his Composition is render'd subject to the blind Impulse of Sense.

BUT such an Overbearing of *Reason* could never be, if Reason itself was not corrupt: Corrupt in the most perfect, tho' not in Essence, yet in Quality and Effect. It's Strength and Perception are both impaired; and by that Means it is the easier captivated by the false Representations of the sensitive Appetite. Hence it is easy to discern, where true *Freedom* lies: For this low Faculty is plainly constrained in its Acts, having no *Freedom*, no Power to resist the Blandishments of any *simple Apprehension*; so that here can be no Place for any *moral Good or Evil*: And if *Reason* once becomes subjected to its Dominion, as is much to be feared without the Aids of Religion, the Man (I'm sure) will have little Reason to boast of his *Freedom*; but is rather bound to Error and Vice; and even chargeable with Evil in many Things that, in their Nature, are indifferent.

SUCH is the Bondage of the *natural State*. Let us now turn our Enquiry to that of the *Law*. I mean the *old Law*; which rigorously exacted a compleat Obedience, without Failure in the lowest Instance; and that by a Man's natural unassisted Strength, as the Condition of his Acceptance with God: For such was the Sanction of the Law, as the Apostle witnesseth, (*Galat. iii, 10, from Deut. xxvii, 26*.) *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things, which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them*: Which being an impossible Condition, after that Man had sinned himself into Corruption and Impotence, concludes the Law that required it to have been a Yoke indeed; a Bondage to Guilt, Wrath, and endless Ruin, without Place for Repentance, or for Mercy.

As to the *Ceremonial Law*, St. Peter makes no Difficulty to declare, that it was an intolerable Yoke*. It was a costly, laborious, and painful Service; which could never be compleatly observed in all Parts; and was in itself an insufficient † Remedy for Sin. But the Deliverance from this Yoke being the least Part of our *Freedom by Christ*, I dwell no longer upon it.

THIS I desire to observe, that what is spoken of our Deliverance from the *Law*, is not to be taken for an Abrogation of the Law, consider'd as a *Rule of Obedience*; but only, the Emancipation of spiritual Men and Believers from the Curse and Rigour of it, wherein the *Servitude* of the Law properly stands. We are to distinguish between a gracious and equitable Mitigation of *Rigour*, and an absolute Abolition of *Law*. It never was the Design of Christ to abolish the *moral Law*, as any Ingredient in our *Freedom*; but only, as was said, to relax it's Severity, by taking from Believers that Curse denounced by it against the slightest Deviation. And indeed, he that is not thus freed by *Christ* (which is the Case of Unbelievers) is still liable to the Curse of Non-Obedience: Whilst they who fly from that Sentence to the Covenant of Grace in *Jesus*, become truly free: And the first Step to this *Freedom* is a deep Sense of their sinful hopeless Condition, by the Conviction of the Law. *Christ's* Business in the World was to save

* *Acts* xv, 10.

† *Heb.* x, 4.

*Sinners; sensible, self-humbling Sinners: To * ease the heavy laden; to comfort them that mourn; and to deliver the Captives from their Chains and Fetters. Hereby they become free, as from the Dominion of Sin, so likewise from the Curse that is it's Due. Their earnest Desire to obey is accepted in the room of an indefective Obedience, because one of the Race of Men, as our Representative by divine Appointment, i. e. Jesus Christ, God and Man, has fully satisfied the Rigour of the Law, by his faultless Obedience.*

BUT of all this which *Christ* has performed to rescue Man from *Bondage*, there is nothing to countenance *Licentiousness*, or such a Liberty as consists merely in doing what we list, without any sort of Restriction; for that is the Parent of Misrule and Disorder, to say the least. *Christ's Religion*, tho' easy in Comparison of the *Law*, is nevertheless termed a *Yoke*: A *Yoke* we are bound to take upon us, or undergo that which is infinitely more insupportable. It every where prescribes a spotless Purity, and most consummate Virtue; and all it's Injunctions are calculated to that End: But then, it requires not this with the same indispensable Rigour which the *Law* did: It imposes an easier Condition, namely *Faith*; not *indefective Obedience*: And it allows Place for Repentance after Sin, which the *Law* denied us. And as to the Requisition of that higher Pitch of Virtue, which few, perhaps, have ever attained to; it seems intended to spur us on to a *rigorous Obedience*, and to keep us *humble* thro' a Sense of our Defectiveness, by acquainting us with our Obligation if rigorously dealt by, so as we may the more ardently apply to our Redeemer; rather than an indispensable Condition of Salvation, under the Grace of the Gospel. What I understand by this *high Pitch of Virtue*, is the Summit and utmost Perfection of all Gospel Graces and Virtues; a flaming Ardour in Religion and Fervency of Devotion, and Zeal for God, which Night and Day makes the Soul anxious to advance his Glory, in speaking his *Praises*, and pouring forth assiduous *Prayer*; and a burning *Love* to every Man, exemplified in all imaginable Ways of Esteem and Beneficence.

II. THE second Thing proposed is, to enquire wherein the proper Exercise of this *Freedom of Christians* consists.

THE *Negative* is contained in the Text; not by Works of the *Flesh*, of the Particulars whereof we find a long Catalogue in the 19th, and some following Verses of this Chapter. Some of these I may occasionally mention, but here chuse to understand by *Flesh*, more generally, the inferior Faculty of the Soul; or rather, the corrupted Bent of Nature, and Loss of God's Image; whereby the carnal Mind becomes violently inclin'd to inordinate Affections and insatiable Lusts: as being either altogether destitute of Grace and Godliness, which is the vilest Degree of carnal Subjection; or, if regenerate, being still weak, having attained but the Infant-step into *Christ's Religion*, and yet more forcibly sway'd by *Flesh* than by the *Spirit*.

* Matt. xi, 28, &c. *Isai.* lxi, 1, 2, 3.

Now, was there nothing else to be said in Disparagement of this Principle, beside that Declaration in the written Word, that it excludes Men from the *Kingdom of God*; that alone is equivalent to a thousand Reasons for our flying from it's wretched *Bondage*: And should it ever be our Unhappiness to deprive ourselves, either thro' Wantonness or Ignorance, of the Hope and Privilege of being Denizens of that glorious Kingdom; be our Pretensions to *Freedom* never so well grounded in other Respects, whatever tends to vacate this excellent Privilege, does likewise tend to enslave us in the most concerning Sense. And such, indeed, is the Tendency of *Libertinism*; while it imposes on our Judgments and Wills, under the specious Title and Dress of *Liberty*.

BUT beside this judicial Declaration, the intrinsic Nature of Vice and Sin prove them to be inconsistent with the *Happiness*, and consequently with the *Freedom*, of a rational Mind. All Men may perceive that Vice is insatiable, and, when Conscience is wanting, knows no Bounds: "It ends not where it began;*" seeing there is a Catenation in *Vices*, as well as *Virtues*; whereby one draws on another; that a third; and so on, until it settles in downright *Impiety*: Wherein the universal Difference between Vile and Comely, Good and Evil, is almost extinct, or has but some obscure Traces remaining in the Mind: No Struggles; no Reverence for Conscience; but an intire Subjection to the *Dominion of Sin*. Such is the Hazard of complexional Sins especially, which have some Possession in the best of Men; and would soon render them the Proficients in Vice now described, did not Grace give some Check to the growing Evil.—It is further worth considering, that *Vice* being, in all Mens Opinion, utterly repugnant to the essential Purity of the divine Mind, it must needs be the Object of his Dislike and Aversion; and consequently, it's own intrinsic Turpitude must derive Unhappiness upon the Guilty, altho' there had been no explicit Declaration concerning it in the reveal'd Will of God.

As it appears from hence, that the proper Exercise of our *Liberty* does not consist in the *Licentiousness of Vice*; let us briefly enquire wherein it does *positively* consist. Here the *Antithesis*, which the Apostle sets between *Flesh* and *Spirit*, determines the Method I am to follow. We must not use our *Liberty* to an Indulgence of the *Flesh*; but (according to the known Rule of Opposites) must exert it in *Works of the Spirit*, of which the Apostle speaks in the 22d and 23d Verses.

If *Faith*, there included among the *Fruits of the Spirit*, be taken for that Evangelical Grace which is made the Condition of Acceptance and Salvation thro' *Christ*, as the Argument seems to require; then the Enumeration here given will comprehend all Branches of a Christian Obligation: That *Faith* will represent *Fidelity* toward God in general: *Temperance*, all that Duty which respects ourselves: And *Love*, that which we owe to one another: Whereof *Joy*, *Peace*, *Long Suffering*, *Gentleness*, *Goodness*, and *Meekness*, are so many Diversifications. These are titled *Fruits of the Spirit*, because they are effected by the Impulse and

* *Neque enim ultum finitur vitium ibi ubi oritur.* VAL. MAX. lib. ix, cap. 1.

Guidance of the Holy Spirit, and reside in a spiritualized Mind; and imply all *Godliness*.

As it is natural to wish and study our own Advantage, it must be also natural to examine how that End may be accomplished, and to resolve upon the Pursuit of it; and this Resolution will bring us to an immediate Sense of *moral Duty*. If we are not very superficial Observers, we can't but read in the great Volume of Nature, that the almighty Author of our Being designed us to be happy; and may thence conclude, that the Promises and Threatnings of his revealed Will are not so much intended for Restraints on our *Liberty*, as Motives to complying with the strong Appetite of our Nature for Happiness. I think it evident, that this Happiness cannot consist in bodily Gratifications of any Kind; and therefore, the *Bounds* that are set to us with Respect to them, infringe not our proper *Liberty*. Virtue alone is the Happiness of a rational Mind: Witness that Delight which accompanies the Acts of Devotion and Love, Hope and Beneficence; and the Disorders both of Mind and Body usually attending Malice, Envy, Discontent, and other turbulent Passions: Witness also the terrible Presages of Conscience, about that future Condition which is to succeed a Course of Impiety. Sure if such a State is at all believed, a Being capable of Immortality can never be accounted happy, was it even to possess the utmost of it's Wishes in this Life, without Alloy or Interruption, unless it hath an Interest in that future immortal Life; and that (if there be such a Life) can only be by *Virtue*. The Sum of the Argument is this: The Soul having an unbounded Appetite for Happiness, and being naturally anxious about Futurity, can no where acquiesce but in Eternity. It perceives it's Knowledge of God to be neither so perfect, nor so constant, as to afford it Content and Happiness, and therefore endeavours to supply the Defect by repeated Acts of Contemplation; by studying his revealed Will; by purifying it's Faculties; and by a regular Practice of his Religion and Worship, according to all *moral and positive Obligation*.

* THIS Distinction between *Moral* and *Positive* will serve for a Transition to what I am to offer upon pure Christian Duty.——*Moral*, properly speaking, is what flows from the Image of God in Man, either created with him, as all Precepts concerning Love to God and Man; or restored by Grace after the Fall, as the Commands about Faith, Repentance, and the like: And these comprehend all *Morality*. Some Things may be convenient, and for that Reason enjoined; tho' they do not thus proceed necessarily from God's Attributes, or Man's Composition: But such are not of *moral*, but of *positive* Obligation; as solely depending upon his *positive* Command. Thus, for Instance, to *worship* God is naturally and *morally* good; but the Circumstances of Time and Manner are arbitrary and *positive*, depending intirely upon the Revelation of his Will: The one is immutable and eternal; the other revocable when God pleases. However, this does not extend to the *Means* needful in the Accomplishment of *moral Duty*: These *Means*, as well as the Duty they refer to, are of *moral* Obligation; thus *Magistracy* (to give one Instance) being necessary to enforce the Exercise of mutual *Justice* among Men, must needs partake of the *Morality* of

that common Duty. The same may be said of such Acts of the godly Life, as are inseparably connected with *moral Goodness*, and are even *moral* for the Matter of them: Of which Kind are *Diligence* in enquiring into the Will of God; *Scruples* in regarding it; and, as the Apostle speaks*, *working out Salvation with Fear and Trembling*.

THIS brings me to the Consideration of *Piety* or *Godliness*, as the Complex of Christian Duty. This, as *inward*, principally consists in *honouring* and *esteeming* God; *loving* him, and therefore studying to please him; *fearing* him, and *reverencing* all his Commands: In a Word, in *Faith*, *Reliance*, and *Humility*. The external Act of Piety comprehends *Adoration*, in all those Tokens of Honour which testify a real inward Regard; and *Prayer*, with *Thanksgiving*. This is that Course which the Scriptures metaphorically call *Light*: Whence Christians are said to shine as *† Lights in the World*; and are commanded to *‡ walk in the Light*, and as ** *Children of the Light*: That is, in such a Manner as becomes Persons who have been made Partakers of the Knowledge of God, and careful to shun the Works of Darkness.

As to *Fear*, which is sometimes put for all *Godliness*, it is of two Kinds. One is a *servile Fear*; regarding God as a rigorous and dreadful Lord, hard to be appeased when once offended. Such is the *Fear* we sometimes see in those Men, who, having contemned the Laws and Service of God through their Lives, are ready to tumble into their Graves in a Temper of Soul but little remov'd from Desperation. This Kind of *Fear* is the usual Cause of *Superstition*: And 'tis of it the Apostle speaks, when comparing the Dispensation of the *Law* to that of the *Gospel*; *†† Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*.

HOWEVER, this *Fear* is not absolutely to be condemn'd, because certain Circumstances do necessarily beget and require it; yet it is vastly inferior to that *filial Fear*, which is grounded on the Consideration of God's paternal Goodness, and which ought to reside in every Christian. For altho' the Gospel abounds more in Promises than in Threatnings, yet it has Threats enough to convince us, that every Violator of the Covenant is still obnoxious to Rejection and Vengeance. I readily own, that the true Christian Fear does not so much consist in Sentiments of Dread and Horrour, as in a sweet Mixture of Love and Awe; and that the Dread of Vengeance is rather the Necessity and Unhappiness of a sinful Condition, than the Duty of Fear in the Meaning of the Gospel. But yet we may find, that even this *Gospel-Fear* has the Fate to be branded by some with the disgraceful Character of *Superstition*; that great pretended Bugbear of Libertines.——*Superstition* is a Pretence of doing more in God's Service than he requires; and is, indeed, not only a needless Intrusion upon our *Freedom*, but criminal also, as it proceeds from a groundless *Fear*, which derogates from the Mercy and Goodness of God. Nevertheless, even this dreaded *Superstition* is an Argument of some Reverence for God; and upon that Account, notwithstanding

* Philip. ii, 12

† Matt. v, 19.

‡ 1 John, i, 7.

** Eph. v, 8.

†† Rom. viii, 15.

all its Mistakes, is by far preferable to *Impiety*, which speaks nothing but Contempt, and is a wilful Bondage to the Flesh and Corruption.

We see then how little Reason we have to expect such a *Freedom* in Religion, as admits of no Restraints at all. The Essence of *Freedom* is, to act without Compulsion; and accordingly, our Service is spoke of as the Service of a *willing Mind*, which is *perfect Freedom*. But for a Freedom from all Restraints, it is what our Nature was never design'd to, nor is capable of. Wherever there is *Dependence*, there must be *Subjection*: And we, to get above that *Dependence*, must first get above the natural Condition of *Man*, and make ourselves equal with *God*. * [So that if it is but granted that there is a *God*; and some Subject of his making, capable of adhering voluntarily to him; there needs no more, in my Opinion, to prove the Necessity of the Dependence and Subjection that are implied in *Religion*: For the general Import of Religion is, the cleaving and adhering of some free and reasonable Creature to *God*, with due Lowliness and Submission; who being sensible of the divine Excellencies and Perfections, and persuaded that himself, and all his Powers and Enjoyments, have come from his Hand, will be naturally disposed, whenever he reasons freely, to render all back to him; and to prefer whatever Reason persuades is his Will; as, in general, Right before Wrong, Good before Evil, whether expressly required or not: And since it is universally allowed to be good to *worship God*, and to *do good* to Men, he will be disposed to acquit himself faithfully of the Obligation to both these Duties; *worshipping God* by *Fear, Love, Faith, Hope, and Obedience*; and behaving towards all Men inoffensively, faithfully, and beneficently; neither violating Engagements; injuring the Innocent, refusing equitable Assistance, nor maltreating Benefactors: In a Word, doing to others what he would have them to do unto him, in a parallel Case; and forbearing to do to others what himself would dislike, or think unjust.

THIS is pure natural Religion; and let any one judge if it does not impose many great Restraints upon the corrupt Wills of Men: And yet the Obligation of this Religion is generally acquiesced in. How unreasonable then must it be, to complain of *Christianity*, as abridging our Liberties?] *Christianity* is not different, in the main, from natural Religion; but an Improvement of it: Setting its Duties in a more advantageous Light, and annexing the Sanction of Rewards, which un-enlighten'd Nature could have no tolerable Guess about: Excepting the Doctrines that refer to, and depend upon, those of *Justification* by Faith in *Christ*, free Election to Life and Glory, the Efficacy of Repentance; and two positive Precepts peculiar to *Christ's Religion*: But these are so far from increasing the Burden of Religion, that it is much to be feared, an Occasion is taken from some of them to bind Men faster in natural Turpitude; for, believing readily whatever is said of *God's* being gracious, and willing to remit Sins thro' the Efficacy of *Christ's* Mediation, they venture to go on in Evil; and hope that *Jesus* will be their Saviour, notwithstanding their Presumption.

* All this between the Brackets was left out in Preaching.

THUS having given some Account of the Nature of the *Liberty* which we are called to, as Christians; which there is not Time, nor any great Need (I imagine) in this Audience, to branch out into more Particulars: I proceed to

III. THE Third Enquiry propos'd; namely, the genuine Signs and Effects of this Liberty, as summ'd up by the Apostle in one Article, *Love: By Love serve one another.*

THAT I may adapt this Part of our Text to the present Occasion, I take the Liberty to consider this effective *Love* according to it's general Import; acknowledging, the Apostle's primary Design therein was to recommend that particular Branch of mutual *Service*, which consists in forbearing to give Scandal and Offence to our weaker Brethren, through an unreasonable Use of our Christian Liberty.

LOVE is an Affection too well understood to need defining. It is what Nature exacts, and God requires. The Gospel of *Christ*, which is all Love, sets it in the highest Rank of Virtues, and makes it the peculiar Characteristic of a true Disciple of *Jesus*. God is Love; Christ is Love: And nothing elevates Men to so near a Resemblance of the divine Nature, as unfeigned Love to one another.

THE two main Parts or Properties of this Affection are *Benevolence* and *Benevolence*: The one implying a hearty Desire of the Good and Happiness of it's Object; the other, a zealous Attention to the promoting that Good, by a seasonable Exercise of actual Assistance, Munificence, and Liberality.

1. *BENEVOLENCE*, then, being a Propension of Soul which wishes well to another, is but another Word for *Friendship*, when the Affection is reciprocal; but if it only resides in one of the Parties, 'tis what we term *Benignity* and *Good nature*, and gives Rise to the Virtue of *Humanity*. The Offices hercof are too many and various to be now minutely described: Therefore, I will but briefly touch upon the Particulars enumerated by St. *Paul*, under the Denomination of *Fruits of the Spirit*; viz. *Joy, Peace, Long Suffering, Gentleness, Faith, Meekness.*

BY *Joy* is signified a chearful easy Temper, and submissive Deportment to one another; free from that morose and haughty Humour, that sour and forbidding Carriage, which is apt to depress the Spirits of our Friends; and instead of rendering us easy together, which is the true Genius of Friendship, imbitters all our Intercourse with one another.

PEACE here implies a sedate and quiet Spirit; such as never rages with unruly turbulent Passions, which are so apt to divide us; never gives Way to the gloomy Vice *Envy*, nor the *self tormenting* Disease of *Malice*; never discomposed by factious or seditious Designs: In short, not hasty in giving or taking Offence, nor apt to entertain any groundless Jealousies or Suspensions, tending to Contempt or Dishonour: But always peaceable, always humble, always regular; it's great Endeavour is to harmonize the World.

MEEKNESS

MEEKNESS and *Long-Suffering* differ only as Lesser and Greater: *Long-Suffering* is the highest Degree of *Meekness*. Both relate to Patience in Wrongs, and a Toleration of the Infirmities of others; free from Hatred and ill-natur'd Resentment for every Word or Act which may happen to displease. As it often happens, that an Offence is given in Things which do no real Damage, this *meek* Disposition will be ready to slight and overlook them, rather than make them a Subject of Contention and Disunion: If they are in some Degree hurtful, it will easily forgive, and always interpret the Words and Actions of others with Candour: Or should an Injury be so great or sudden as to extort some Resentment, yet it will be resentful without Gall or Malice; and even forgiven in point of Retaliation and Revenge: Yet, without declining our own necessary Defence, or abandoning our Right to the Malice of every unjust Invader.

GENTLENESS is nearly allied to *Meekness*, and most that was said of one, may be applied to the other. It behaves to all Men with Candour and Humility; and is never cruel in Action, nor abusive in Word: It gives a mild and equitable Construction to every Thing that is said or done; and, far from dwelling much upon the *Punctilios* and Formality of an artificial Complement, it chiefly regards the more solid Courtesy of a benign Temper.

FAITH is here the same a *Faithfulness*, or an Agreement between Words and Things, both in Discourses and Promises. This is one of the most amiable among the *social Virtues*, because it tends to the preserving a mutual Confidence amongst Men; and, when managed with Simplicity and open Freedom, must needs conciliate Mens Love to one another: For there is hardly any Thing so taking with the natural Generosity of human Nature, as an undissembled *Trust*. But Disguise, and Concealment of Sentiments, further than Prudence makes necessary, as it is an Argument of Mistrust and Jealousy, can never consist with Union of Affection.

2. **BENEFICENCE**, or *Doing Good*, is the second Thing to be consider'd in *Love*. This is what the Apostle means by *Goodness* in the afore cited Passage, and is but another Name for *Utility*. Herein it is we may be said to *serve one another by Love*: For let *Benevolence* be never so intense, yet whilst it continues to be inffctive, it is unprofitable and unserviceable to all. Whereas the *Love* which operates by an *effective Goodness*, is truly beneficial. It is this that communicates good Things, whether of Mind or Body, to other Men: It is this which obliges a Person to look on every Man as another *self*, and a Member of the same Body; and therefore causes him to account it one End of his Life and Being to be instrumental to the Good of others; to relieve the Distressed, assist the Weak, comfort the Afflicted, reduce the Unruly, bear with the Frail, instruct and advise the Ignorant; in a Word, to do all possible Good, by Act, Counsel, and *Example*.

THUS it is we *serve one another*. Thus we *bear one another's Burdens*, which is said to *fulfil the Law of Christ*.——But, if we are to be *Servants* then to Men, some may probably ask, How are we then free?——We *serve in Love*, than which Affection nothing is more free. There is no Compulsion in *Love*. What was said of *Licentiousness* in it's Contrast with Liberty, may be as truly said

said of *Selfishness*, when opposed to *Beneficence* and *Liberality*. The selfish Man is in truth a Slave to a wretched tyrannizing Master: Lust of Wealth, Lust of Power, Lust of fleshly Gratifications, are insatiable Demands; always craving, always driving, but never contented, nor suffering the Breast in which they reside to be at Peace. Whereas the Promptness to be of Use to all, as far as a Person's Capacity and Influence reach, is the Source of inward Delight, and Parent of Esteem and Acceptance in our Societies: This, as one* observes, "insinuates Respect and Good-Will: This encompasses a Man with Friends, which are so many Guards of his Safety, Supporters of his Fortune, Patrons of his Reputation, Succourers of his Necessity, and Comforters of his Affliction."

HOWEVER, this Office, it must be own'd, admits of some Limitations as to the Degrees of *Service*: For both Reason and Religion suggest Measures of *Beneficence*, proportion'd to the Relation, and more especially the *Worthiness*, of those, with whom we have to do.—

THAT *Sameness of Nature* that is in all Men, is a rational Ground of *Fellowship* and *Union*; and demands all these common Offices of *Beneficence*, which come within the Import of the Word *Humanity*: Whether the Subject be worthy or unworthy, known or unknown, or however distant from us, either in Dwelling or Opinion; and, which is more difficult than all, tho' he were a declar'd Enemy, there is a Degree of *Love* due from us, which ought to be always *active*, and always *sincere*. All this is beautifully described in our Saviour's Parable of the *Samaritan*; *Luke x.*

HOWEVER, it is not to be doubted, that nearer *Relations* do challenge from us, higher Measures of Affection and Assistance; and these still more intense and vigorous, according to the Proximity and Endearments of that Relation: Consider Men as united in *Family*, *Country*, *Parish*, *Neighbourhood*, or any voluntary *Association*; every Sort of *Fellowship* hath some peculiar Offices of *Benevolence* and *Generosity* appropriate to it, beside those general ones which must have Place in all, as belonging to, and resulting from, our common *Humanity*. But especially, the Good, the Virtuous, the Faithful, in every Relation, have an indefeasible Title to the highest Measures of our Esteem and Honour, Love and Service. In this we shall but imitate God and Christ, who distinguish the *Worthy*; and shall but comply likewise with the Precept of *doing Good to all, but especially to them that are of the Household of Faith*.

I HAVE said nothing of the more eminent Stations in any of our Relations, whether *Rulers* of Families, or Commonwealths; and any others who move in Spheres superior to the common Equality of the lower Class: Since all agree that a higher Degree of Love and Honour is due to them, than to any other Individual of that respective Union. Every particular Member of a Society contributes something to the Constitution, and ought to be assistant to the rest, according to his Measure: Tho' the Strength and Harmony of the whole necessarily requires a Super-eminence of some executive or ruling Members, on whom

the greater Share of the Burden should devolve ; and for this very Reason, these are intitled, as I said, to more eminent Degrees of Love, Honour, and Support, than any of the common Rank. As in a *regular Building*, every Stone should be so situate as to berr it's Proportion of the Weight, in order to it's contributing to the Compactness of the Whole ; tho' all can not be of equal Importance : So in every well-order'd *Society*, all the Members, cemented together by mutual Help and Love, lighten each other's Burthen, and constitute one undivided well-compacted *Edifice* : And in a religious Sense (to use the Scripture Metaphor), as *lively Stones*, compose a *Temple consecrated* to the Lord.

AND now, my Brethren, altho' it may be perceived by you, that I had your Order in my View, in all that has been hitherto said about *Love* ; yet, I'm sensible the Application has been too generally expressed to afford the Satisfaction which others may desire, as to the Nature of your Fellowship ; and which I am likewise willing to give, as far as Prudence will suffer me to do : I persuade myself they have more Reason than to expect, that the peculiar *Arcana* of the Brotherhood, which I have been entrusted with, can be *unveiled* by me. What I propose then in the Sequel, is briefly to consider the Consequences of this *Love*, as more particularly applicable to the present Occasion.

ONE immediate Effect of *Love*, is *Union* : If not an *Union* in Judgment and Opinion, at least *Union of Affection* ; with which a Disagreement in private Sentiments may well enough consist, when Men divest themselves of Prejudice, Pride, and Bigotry. Hence arises *Friendship*, the greatest Blessing of this World : *Friendship* ! which surrounds a Man with Eyes to watch for his Safety, and Hands to help and defend him. *Friendship* ! which benefits the whole Community, by making one of so many of it's Members ; and conjoining in one indissoluble Band a Number of Persons, whose particular Diversities of Opinion would have kept them at a perpetual Distance from one another. Lovely, peaceful *Friendship* ! joining Hands, uniting Hearts, covering Secrets, reprov'ing Errors, and giving one Heart and one Tongue to all it's Votaries.

THIS is the *Foundation* on which all *Societies* have been originally raised, and the Pillar they are supported by : And I may be allowed to say, without exaggerating, that of all *private Societies* that have ever been instituted, this now present is most excellent ; whether we consider it's well-grounded Pretensions to Antiquity, or the Wisdom of it's Orders and Regulations, or the Harmony, Peace, Love, and Inoffensiveness, of the Members which compose it.

I SPEAK this with a Respect to their Assemblies. I don't take upon me to say, that the Individuals are better Men than others, in their Families, Neighbourhoods, or other particular Relations : Tho' I will be bold to aver, that no well instructed *Mason* did ever become a worse Man, in any Respect, by being of that Fraternity. But, if a temporary Adherence to the Rules of Virtue will be granted to be an Improvement (and surely a temporary Virtue is preferable to a Life of continual Intemperance or Prophaneness), in that Sense it may be said of every Person who becomes a *Mason*, that he is the better Man : And if he is a good Proficient in the Grounds of his Art, he will be so at all Times,

and in all his Relations. But, however it may be as to the Individuals, in their private Capacities, and personal Conduct; as a Society they are unreproachable, whilst they keep up to the Rules and Orders of *Free-Masonry*: And accordingly we find, that in their Hours of meeting and enjoying one another (to let you into as much of their Character as it is convenient to disclose), nothing but Peace and Freedom, Love and Innocence, and Good-Humour, reign. There are no Disputes in Religion or Politics ever admitted; no Wrangling about Properties; no slandering of the absent, nor reproaching the present; no indecent Abuse of the Name of the great *Jehovah*; nor of themselves by Intemperance: In short, nothing inconsistent with Religion or Good Manners.——This is, or ought to be, the Character of a *Mason*, according to the fundamental Constitutions of that *Union*: And if it should so happen that one Brother proves irregular, (which is less to be wonder'd at here than in *Christianity*, where such Irregularity is too common, notwithstanding it is of divine Institution,) they endeavour to reclaim him by Admonition; and quite expell him their Society, if he continues to be incorrigible.

Now if any Person present shall judge me to have been partial in this Account, or imagine that I have strain'd the Truth in Favour of this Society: * [and should assert, or could even prove, that any Thing inconsistent with moral Virtue has at any Time happened in a *Lodge*, which I am satisfied is a very rare Thing; I shall be acquit of Partiality, when I declare, that I have neither seen nor heard of any such Thing; which, if it has ever happened, let the Guilty bear the Blame of.——*Masonry* will be for ever vindicated by it's avowed Principles and Designs: As to which, I dare the most licentious Brother to deny, that Prophaneness, Intemperance, Quarrels, and every other Kind of Immorality, are absolutely repugnant to the fundamental Charge of a *Free Mason*; as will appear by the following Extract from their Book of Constitutions.——In Consequence of which, I affirm, that whatever *Lodge* infringes this fundamental Charge, it's Members are not good and faithful Brothers, and are despised and abhorred, with Pity, by all that are so.——Let not Envy and Ignorance therefore charge the Whole with the Faults of a few rotten Members, if yet there be any such. Is *Christianity* a bad Thing, because some individual Persons, or even Societies, of profess'd Christians are bad? Who would not be ashamed of such an Argument?——I must own, I have seen, in a Printed Book, a few Songs, called *Masons Songs*, which are too justly liable to Censure; but let it be remembered, that *Songs* are no Part of *Masonry*: and whatever *Lodge* admits of these Songs, or any such, falls under the Condemnation just mentioned; without fixing any Stain upon *Masonry*, whose Principles discourage and prohibit every Thing of this Kind.——For my own Part, I have never been Witness to the using of such Songs; and neither I, nor, I believe, any good Brother, would be so, if we could possibly foresee it.

* *What is between the Brackets was not delivered in the Sermon; but added here to correct an Assertion delivered, " That no Brother ever came reeling away drunk from a Lodge, or bruised and wounded from a Fray therein: " Which, upon Reflection, I think was too positive; as it is impossible for me to know what may have happened in some Lodges,*

I know there are many Invektives, thrown out against our Society, which I believe my Brethren will not expect I should here take any particular Notice of;] nor of the whimsical Surmises concerning it's Nature and Design, that are so current among the Vulgar. Indeed some of these are so ridiculously diverting, it would almost tempt one to wish the Ignorance they proceed from might continue. Yet, since I have undertaken to divulge candidly to others what may be divulged, I will assure them, in Answer to those who fancy *Masonry* to be, as the Vulgar speak, a *new Sect* in Religion, that it is not properly a religious Society at all; and much less a Society of declared Enemies to Religion, as another ignorant Part of the People imagine. Their Printed *Charges*, which all may see, are sufficient to obviate all such Mistakes, and to justify both their Designs and Practice. There it is said, "A Mason, if he understands the Art, will be neither a stupid Atheist, nor irreligious Libertine.——He will be a peaceable Subject to Magistracy, and not meddle in Plots.——That no scandalous immoral Men ought to be admitted.——That their Mirth shall be innocent, without Excess or Compulsion.——That they shall yield due Honour to the Rank of a Brother, notwithstanding their Equality as *Masons*.——That they shall make Peace between contending Brethren, and relieve the Indigent as far as they are able, and no farther; always preferring a poor *Brother*, if a good *Man*, before others in the same Circumstances.——In a Word, it is there declared, That brotherly Love is the Foundation and Glory of this antient Fraternity."

I THINK, the most violent Oppugners of the Fraternity will not cavil at these Orders. It is true, they go no farther than *moral* Religion: But let it not be thought, that a *Mason* lays himself under any Sort of Obligation to be of that Religion *only*. We are to consider Mankind as separated from one another, not so much by the Boundaries of Kingdoms and Nations, as by the Animosities usually consequent to a Difference of Sentiments, especially in Religion: Hence there seem'd to be wanting some certain *Band*, whereby Men, merely as *Men*, might be conjoined as *Friends* and *Brethren*, notwithstanding a Disagreement in any particular Principles. *Masonry* (if I am not mistaken) is that *Band*; and hence it is, that the Religion of Nature is the Religion of *Masons*, as such: Else *Masonry* would be defective as to that *universal Comprehension*, which it seems to have been originally design'd and fitted for; and which, in my Opinion, is one of the great Excellencies of this antient Scheme: *Namely*, that *Men* of every Denomination might be able to unite themselves together by some one Principle common to all.——However, when *Christians* become *Masons*, it is always presumed that they will continue in that *Faith*; there being nothing in all their Art repugnant to the *Faith*, or to any of the *Precepts* of *Jesus Christ*.

THIS may serve to give some Notion of the general Design of this antient Society: As to it's peculiar *Knowledge*, and Ways of *Conversing*, they are reserved for another Place.——I now beg Leave to conclude with a Word of Exhortation to you, my Brethren, in Reference to the foregoing Subject.

I MUST now address you as *Christian Masons*, and humbly intreat you to make the pure Religion of the holy *Jesus* the Basis of your *Freedom*. As *Freedom* is your Character, so let the truest *Idea* of it be your Choice. I believe
you

You are persuaded, that there are no Liberties which it becomes human Nature to take, abridged by Virtue and Piety. All *Pollution*, all *Prophaneness* and *Ill-Will*, are unnatural; and therefore can have no Place in *your*, or any Man's *Freedom*; But these fly away before the *great Star* of the Gospel, as Darkness before the Sun. — Had you engaged yourselves in this Union, by a Vow even more binding than any which your impenetrable Secrecy causes the People to imagine; yet, if it was intended to bind you to any Course or Action contrary to the Gospel, it would be void in itself; not only because the Vow, by which you have been dedicated to *Christ*, is prior to it; but also, because your Obligation to *Christianity* is indispensibly necessary, and never can be cancell'd. But since this is not the Case, I am but pressing you to be compleat *Masons*, while I persuade you to be upright Men, and holy Christians. *You have been called unto Liberty*; but, my dear and worthy Brethren, I beseech you never to believe, that an Indulgence in Vice and Impiety is any Part of your *Freedom*. Remember your Name: Think upon the Badge of your Profession: And be ye Masters of your Art. Endeavour for an Illumination in the divine Doctrines of the Saviour *Jesus*; and let *Wisdom*, Heaven-born *Wisdom*, guide your Actions, and adorn your Lives: This will be your Door to *perfect Liberty*; your Saviour himself will make you free; and you have his Word, that *if the Son makes you free, you are free indeed*.

AND while you, and all of this Fraternity, are every where commended for your mutual *Affection* to each other; I hope there is no Necessity that you should be cautioned against the unchristian and unmanly Temper of *Narrow Spiritedness* toward others. Your *Funds*, I own, ought to be appropriated to the peculiar Uses for which they have been created: But yet, your Obligations to other Men, in any of your Relations, must suffer no Diminution by your being *Masons*. And I further beg Leave to observe, that as our Relation to *Christians*, as such, is antecedent to all voluntary Associations whatsoever; so, a good *Fellow Christian* is better intitled to our Love and Esteem, and to our good Offices, in a private Way, than an *irreligious Brother Mason*.

PERHAPS I do not speak the Sense of all my Brethren in this; but you have heard my Reasons for the Persuasion, and altho' they should not be alike satisfactory to others, yet you'll allow that it is my inherent Privilege, to deliver my Sentiments here with Freedom.

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MAY it please our almighty Lord, to establish us with Grace in the Truth of his holy Gospel; and to strengthen us in the inner Man; to raise us all from the Death of Sin, and Bondage of Pollution, to a Life of Righteousness and true Holiness: That we may be made lively *Temples of the Holy Ghost*, founded on *Jesus*, the true Corner-Stone; and finally pass through the Grave, and Gate of Death, to a joyful Resurrection, through the same *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

NOW to the eternal Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be Glory and Dominion, and all possible Love, Obedience, Adoration, for ever and ever.

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